

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/298,417

Examiner

Alain L. Bashore

Applicant(s)

HOLM-BLAGG ET AL.

Art Unit

3624

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 2-5-04 and 3-1-05.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 9-22.
3. ☐ The drawings filed on _____ are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.


Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☒ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☒ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☒ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____


ALAIN L. BASHORE
PRIMARY EXAMINER

DETAILED ACTION

Allowable Subject Matter

1. Claims 9-22 are allowed as amended according to the examiner's amendment below.

Allowable subject matter requires a second level review for applications in class 705 before a notice of allowance is mailed to applicant. The time period for review may vary from application to application.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

3. Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Ms. Haapala on 3-17-05.

4. The application has been amended as follows:
Claim 9, line 1, insert –using a computer--, after “method”.
Claim 17, line 1, insert –using a computer--, after “method”.
Cancel claims 73-75.

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5. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The present invention includes independent claims 9 and 17. Claim 9 and 17 recite a method using a computer for applying a group payment to a group.

Watson is considered the closest prior art.

Watson teaches a consolidated billing system that generates a single household bill for services used by the household (col. 2, lines 6-26). Each service establishment providing goods and services to a household provides a personal settlements exchange with the billing detail for the household. Id. A consolidated bill is then generated. After a predetermined amount of time has passed, the total payment amount is electronically debited from the bank which the household wishes to have their payments made (col. 2, lines 26-32; col. 4, lines 55-59). If the total amount cannot be collected, the system may retry the debits for a number of times and/or may shift to alternate payment sources (col. 19, lines 15-17; col. 17, lines 62-64).

Watson does not disclose:

In claim 9:

receiving a payment at a payment processor and entering the payment into a computer system;

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determining that the payment is a group payment, wherein determining that the payment is a group payment includes identifying one or more accounts to which the payment is associated and determining that the one or more accounts are associated with a group;

determining which accounts are included in a group payment allocation defined in relation to the group;

comparing the group payment to a group balance, wherein the group balance

indicates a liability due in relation to one or more accounts associated with the group payment allocation;

based upon the comparison between the group payment and the group balance,

identifying a group payment option using the computer system;

calculating the group payment allocation in the computer system using the group payment option, the group payment, the group balance, and the balances of the accounts included in the group payment allocation; and

applying the group payment to the accounts included in the group payment allocation, wherein a liability associated with one or more accounts included in the group payment allocation is reduced through application of at least a portion of the payment.

In claim 17:

entering a payment into a computer system;

determining whether the payment is a group payment;

determining whether payment for the dependent account is due
from a primary;

owner for the group or from a dependent cardholder associated
with the dependent account;

wherein the primary owner for the group is associated with the key
account and the dependent cardholder is associated with the dependent
account;

determining that payment for the dependent account is due from
the primary owner for the group, and applying the group payment to the
key account and the dependent account by:

using a computer system to access a database, and to determine
a group balance from information accessed from the database;

comparing the group payment to a group balance;

based upon the comparison between the group payment and the
group balance, identifying a group payment option;

allocating the group payment between the key account and the
dependent account based upon the group payment option, the group

payment, the group balance, a key account balance and a dependent account balance; and

applying the group payment in accordance with the allocation to reduce a liability due in association with at least one of the dependent account and the key account.

For these reasons claims 9 and 17 are deemed to be allowable over the prior art of record, and claims 10-16, 18-22 are allowable by dependency.

6. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."


Conclusion

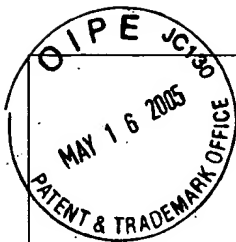
7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alain L. Bashore whose telephone number is 703-308-1884. The examiner can normally be reached on about 7:00 am to 4:30 pm (Monday thru Thursday).

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vincent Millin can be reached on 703-308-1065. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Alain L. Bashore
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3624



Interview Summary

Application No.

09/298,417

Applicant(s)

HOLM-BLAGG ET AL.

Examiner

Alain L. Bashore

Art Unit

3624

All participants (applicant, applicant's representative, PTO personnel):

(1) Alain L. Bashore.

(3) _____.

(2) Ms. Haapala.

(4) _____.

Date of Interview: 17 March 2005.

Type: a) ☒ Telephonic b) ☐ Video Conference

c) ☐ Personal [copy given to: 1) ☐ applicant 2) ☐ applicant's representative]

Exhibit shown or demonstration conducted: d) ☐ Yes e) ☒ No.

If Yes, brief description: _____.

Claim(s) discussed: 9, 17 and 73-75.

Identification of prior art discussed: _____.

Agreement with respect to the claims f) ☒ was reached. g) ☐ was not reached. h) ☐ N/A.

Substance of Interview including description of the general nature of what was agreed to if an agreement was reached, or any other comments: Applicant's representative agreed to the examiner's amendment made of record.

(A fuller description, if necessary, and a copy of the amendments which the examiner agreed would render the claims allowable, if available, must be attached. Also, where no copy of the amendments that would render the claims allowable is available, a summary thereof must be attached.)

THE FORMAL WRITTEN REPLY TO THE LAST OFFICE ACTION MUST INCLUDE THE SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW. (See MPEP Section 713.04). If a reply to the last Office action has already been filed, APPLICANT IS GIVEN ONE MONTH FROM THIS INTERVIEW DATE, OR THE MAILING DATE OF THIS INTERVIEW SUMMARY FORM, WHICHEVER IS LATER, TO FILE A STATEMENT OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW. See Summary of Record of Interview requirements on reverse side or on attached sheet.


ALAIN L. BASHORE
PRIMARY EXAMINER

Examiner Note: You must sign this form unless it is an Attachment to a signed Office action.

Examiner's signature, if required

Summary of Record of Interview Requirements

Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP), Section 713.04, Substance of Interview Must be Made of Record

A complete written statement as to the substance of any face-to-face, video conference, or telephone interview with regard to an application must be made of record in the application whether or not an agreement with the examiner was reached at the interview.

Title 37 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 1.133 Interviews

Paragraph (b)

In every instance where reconsideration is requested in view of an interview with an examiner, a complete written statement of the reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action must be filed by the applicant. An interview does not remove the necessity for reply to Office action as specified in §§ 1.111, 1.135. (35 U.S.C. 132)

37 CFR §1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent or Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.

The action of the Patent and Trademark Office cannot be based exclusively on the written record in the Office if that record is itself incomplete through the failure to record the substance of interviews.

It is the responsibility of the applicant or the attorney or agent to make the substance of an interview of record in the application file, unless the examiner indicates he or she will do so. It is the examiner's responsibility to see that such a record is made and to correct material inaccuracies which bear directly on the question of patentability.

Examiners must complete an Interview Summary Form for each interview held where a matter of substance has been discussed during the interview by checking the appropriate boxes and filling in the blanks. Discussions regarding only procedural matters, directed solely to restriction requirements for which interview recordation is otherwise provided for in Section 812.01 of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, or pointing out typographical errors or unreadable script in Office actions or the like, are excluded from the interview recordation procedures below. Where the substance of an interview is completely recorded in an Examiners Amendment, no separate Interview Summary Record is required.

The Interview Summary Form shall be given an appropriate Paper No., placed in the right hand portion of the file, and listed on the "Contents" section of the file wrapper. In a personal interview, a duplicate of the Form is given to the applicant (or attorney or agent) at the conclusion of the interview. In the case of a telephone or video-conference interview, the copy is mailed to the applicant's correspondence address either with or prior to the next official communication. If additional correspondence from the examiner is not likely before an allowance or if other circumstances dictate, the Form should be mailed promptly after the interview rather than with the next official communication.

The Form provides for recordation of the following information:

- Application Number (Series Code and Serial Number)
- Name of applicant
- Name of examiner
- Date of interview
- Type of interview (telephonic, video-conference, or personal)
- Name of participant(s) (applicant, attorney or agent, examiner, other PTO personnel, etc.)
- An indication whether or not an exhibit was shown or a demonstration conducted
- An identification of the specific prior art discussed
- An indication whether an agreement was reached and if so, a description of the general nature of the agreement (may be by attachment of a copy of amendments or claims agreed as being allowable). Note: Agreement as to allowability is tentative and does not restrict further action by the examiner to the contrary.
- The signature of the examiner who conducted the interview (if Form is not an attachment to a signed Office action)

It is desirable that the examiner orally remind the applicant of his or her obligation to record the substance of the interview of each case. It should be noted, however, that the Interview Summary Form will not normally be considered a complete and proper recordation of the interview unless it includes, or is supplemented by the applicant or the examiner to include, all of the applicable items required below concerning the substance of the interview.

A complete and proper recordation of the substance of any interview should include at least the following applicable items:

- 1) A brief description of the nature of any exhibit shown or any demonstration conducted,
- 2) an identification of the claims discussed,
- 3) an identification of the specific prior art discussed,
- 4) an identification of the principal proposed amendments of a substantive nature discussed, unless these are already described on the Interview Summary Form completed by the Examiner,
- 5) a brief identification of the general thrust of the principal arguments presented to the examiner,
(The identification of arguments need not be lengthy or elaborate. A verbatim or highly detailed description of the arguments is not required. The identification of the arguments is sufficient if the general nature or thrust of the principal arguments made to the examiner can be understood in the context of the application file. Of course, the applicant may desire to emphasize and fully describe those arguments which he or she feels were or might be persuasive to the examiner.)
- 6) a general indication of any other pertinent matters discussed, and
- 7) if appropriate, the general results or outcome of the interview unless already described in the Interview Summary Form completed by the examiner.

Examiners are expected to carefully review the applicant's record of the substance of an interview. If the record is not complete and accurate, the examiner will give the applicant an extendable one month time period to correct the record.

Examiner to Check for Accuracy

If the claims are allowable for other reasons of record, the examiner should send a letter setting forth the examiner's version of the statement attributed to him or her. If the record is complete and accurate, the examiner should place the indication, "Interview Record OK" on the paper recording the substance of the interview along with the date and the examiner's initials.



NOTICE OF DRAFTSPERSON'S PATENT DRAWING REVIEW

The drawing(s) filed (insert date) 04/23/99 are:

- A. ☐ approved by the Draftsperson under 37 CFR 1.84 or 1.152.
B. ☒ objected to by the Draftsperson under 37 CFR 1.84 or 1.152 for the reasons indicated below. Corrected drawings are required.

1. DRAWINGS. 37 CFR 1.84(a): Acceptable categories of drawings: Black ink or Color (3 sets required).

☐ Color drawings are not acceptable until petition is granted. Fig(s) _____
☐ Pencil and non black ink not permitted. Fig(s) _____

2. PHOTOGRAPHS. 37 CFR 1.84(b)

☐ One (1) full-tone set is required. Fig(s) _____
☐ Photographs may not be mounted. 37 CFR 1.84(c)
☐ Photographs must meet paper size requirements of 37 CFR 1.84(f). Fig(s) _____
☐ Poor quality (half-tone). Fig(s) _____

3. TYPE OF PAPER. 37 CFR 1.84(c)

☐ Paper not flexible, strong, white, and durable. Fig(s) _____

☒ Erasures, alterations, overwritings, interlineations, folds, copy machine marks not accepted. Fig(s) 1-10

4. SIZE OF PAPER. 37 CFR 1.84(f): Acceptable sizes:

21.0 cm by 29.7 cm (DIN size A4) or
21.6 cm by 27.9 cm (8 1/2 x 11 inches)
☐ All drawing sheets not the same size.

☐ Sheet(s) _____
☐ Drawings sheets not an acceptable size. Fig(s) _____

5. MARGINS. 37 CFR 1.84(g): Acceptable margins:

Top 2.5 cm Left 2.5 cm Right 1.5 cm Bottom 1.0 cm

☒ Margins not acceptable. Fig(s) 1-10

☒ Top (T) ☒ Left (L)
☒ Right (R) ☒ Bottom (B)

6. VIEWS. 37 CFR 1.84(h)

REMINDER: Specification may require revision to correspond to drawing changes, e.g., if Fig. 1 is changed to Fig. 1A, Fig. 1B and Fig. 1C, etc., the specification, at the Brief Description of the Drawings, must likewise be changed.

☐ Views not labeled separately or properly. Fig(s) _____

7. SECTIONAL VIEWS. 37 CFR 1.84(h)(3)

☐ Sectional designation should be noted with Arabic or Roman numbers. Fig(s) _____

8. ARRANGEMENT OF VIEWS. 37 CFR 1.84(i)
☐ Words do not appear on a horizontal, left-to-right fashion when page is either upright or turned so that the top becomes the right side, except for graphs. Fig(s) _____

9. SCALE. 37 CFR 1.84(k)

☐ Scale not large enough to show mechanism without crowding when drawing is reduced in size to two-thirds in reproduction. Fig(s) _____

10. CHARACTER OF LINES, NUMBERS, & LETTERS. 37 CFR 1.84(l)

☒ Lines, numbers & letters not uniformly thick and well defined, clean, durable, and black (poor line quality). Fig(s) 1-10

11. SHADING. 37 CFR 1.84(m)

☐ Solid black areas pale. Fig(s) _____
☐ Solid black shading not permitted. Fig(s) _____

12. NUMBERS, LETTERS, & REFERENCE CHARACTERS. 37 CFR 1.84(p)

☒ Numbers and reference characters not plain and legible. Fig(s) 1-10

☒ Figure legends are poor. Fig(s) 1-10
☐ Numbers and reference characters not oriented in the same direction as the view. 37 CFR 1.84(p)(1) Fig(s) _____

☐ English alphabet not used. 37 CFR 1.84(p)(2) Fig(s) _____

☒ Numbers, letters and reference characters must be at least 32 cm (1/8 inch) in height. 37 CFR 1.84(p)(3). Fig(s) 1-10

13. LEAD LINES. 37 CFR 1.84(q)

☐ Lead lines missing. Fig(s) _____

14. NUMBERING OF SHEETS OF DRAWINGS. 37 CFR 1.84(t)

☐ Sheets not numbered consecutively, and in Arabic numbers beginning with number 1. Sheet(s) _____

15. NUMBERING OF VIEWS. 37 CFR 1.84(u)

☐ Views not numbered consecutively, and in Arabic numerals, beginning with number 1. Fig(s) _____

16. DESIGN DRAWINGS. 37 CFR 1.152

☐ Surface shading shown not appropriate. Fig(s) _____

☐ Solid black surface shading is not permitted except when used to represent the color black as well as color contrast. Fig(s) _____

COMMENTS:

Reviewer Tang

If you have questions, call (703) 305-3401

Date 03/17/05

Attachment to Paper No. _____

305 0333 X132